BREXIT

Let's get the facts straight

I REFER to Mr Goodman's letter of May 26. I do not know him but I am inclined to point out that the ability to be elected to a local council does not necessarily indicate knowledge.

I have more than a passing knowledge of the workings of the European Community. For 38 years I was a UK civil servant. For 12 of those years I was involved in negotiations with the Commission and fellow Member states. I have avoided becoming embroiled publicly in this debate but I would wish to point out the following observations on Brexit in relation to Mr Goodman's five points.

■ **1.** All new member states who wish to join the EU must join the Euro. This fact finally dawned on Alex Salmond and his fellow Scottish voters in 2014. The UK, Sweden, Denmark and Poland have an opt-out from the single currency for the moment. The UK's opt-out has a greater legal standing. I have no knowledge of a country named "Czechia" and their status vis-à-vis the Euro but I am open to be told.

■ **2.** The legal systems within the EU Member States differ. Many are based on the French Napoleonic system of an investigating magistrate. In many countries it takes what I would consider to be a considerable time before charges are brought and a trial is organised. One case in Malta took at least six years. The legal system in some Member States who recently joined the EU is not a system that people in the UK would tolerate.

■ **3.** The European Defence Force is more than an idea as we will probably discover quite quickly after June 26. I rather suspect that the idea is on hold until the British public decide what we intend to do. However, not all of the EU Member States are members of Nato and some EU Member States are neutral – Ireland, Sweden, Finland, Malta and Austria. The latter by virtue of a treaty with Russia signed in the wake of the Second World War. The guiding principle of Nato is that an attack by another power on a Nato Member State is considered to be an attack on all the members of the Alliance. What would the EU do if Orangeland invaded Finland? I can just see Mr Junckers trying to obtain a consensus for action on that potential problem.

■ **4.** I am 70 years old and long before the EU's existence the UK government paid subsidies to its farmers. That was the policy of successive governments in the post-war period. If we were to leave the EU, a UK government would decide on the need for, and level, of any farming subsidies. It may interest readers to note that in a few EU Member States, farmers receive subsidies for growing tobacco!

■ **5.** I have no view as to whether the EU as an organisation is "Godless". Whether a person, or a country or organisation believes in the existence of a supreme being is a matter for them and the electorate in the country where they live. France is a secular state and has been since the French Revolution. As a wise person said long ago: "Render on to Caesar that which is Caesar's." It seems a simple rule to follow.

As the Commons' Treasury Select Committee pointed out last week, there are certainly claims and counter claims being bandied about on the economic consequences of remaining in or leaving the EU. Your readers must make up their minds as to what they believe about these claims. I can only say that in the case of Mr Goodman he too is guilty of inaccuracy. In the event of a vote to remain it is too late to interest me. However, I have advised my daughter to consider her future and that of my grandson. One cannot pool or share "sovereignty". Either we are an independent country making our own decisions or we are not. I shall vote on that basis pure and simple.

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